

Safeguarding Briefing

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Monday 3rd November 2025

The Impact of News on Children - Internet Matters

The world is one of cycles. The current generation moving through the school system, are doing so in a time of particular instability. The consequence for the media landscape has been a shift from 'light' news to a constant stream of 'heavy' content. Online this trend has been inescapable whether to drive clicks or generate controversy, increasingly our media consumption has been overtaken by gloom.

This pessimistic outlook has been further enhanced by the continuing evolution of AI. News stories that would have once been unquestioned, now straddle the line of real and fake. For children and young people whose critical faculties are not yet fully developed, this can provoke a whirlwind of confusion. Confusion tends to breed negative mental health effects since one can no longer distinguish true from false.

Internet Matters has recently produced a page explaining what can be done, to help children and young people navigate an increasingly murky information space. If interested, please follow the link below:

<https://www.internetmatters.org/hub/research/impact-online-news-childrens-wellbeing/>

Enhancing Cybersecurity: Two-Step Verification - Stop! Think Fraud

Cybersecurity like many security functions is locked in a constant competition between offence and defence. Security firms construct a new

verification method and soon after hackers discover a new way to overcome it. Of the many ways that hackers attempt to perform their craft, two stick out - extortion and fraud. The latter involves the deployment of confidence tricks to fool the computer user into wilfully opening a security window.

Whilst cybersecurity consultants can improve your gatekeeping capabilities, there are many things that the average computer user can do for themselves. One of those is configuring Two-Step Verification. The British government's Stop! Think Fraud internet safety campaign, has produced a guide on how to best utilise this method for enhanced IT security which you can find here:

<https://stopthinkfraud.campaign.gov.uk/protect-yourself-from-fraud/protecting-against-online-fraud/turn-on-2-step-verification-2sv/>

Question of the Week

This week's question is open-ended and has no single answer.

What's one safeguarding myth you have heard, and how do you challenge it?

Mental Health and School Absences - Loughborough University Policy Unit

It is no secret that in the post-COVID educational landscape absences have increased. Whether this is causation or not remains to be seen. The truth however, is that attendance levels nationally have not returned to pre-COVID levels. Increased social anxiety, the increase in parents working from home and increased worries around health in communal settings, have all played a part in a culture shift among those in education. The warning signs associated with persistent absence, including disengagement from education, missed developmental milestones and poor adjustment to non-home environments at young ages, have all begun to take a toll on overall pupil attendance. This is a complex issue with many factors and the Loughborough University Policy Unit has produced a research piece into the issue. If interested in learning more, please follow the link below:

County Lines Evolution - Police Professional

The phenomena of 'county lines' has continued to occupy the headlines. Under the catchy name, lies a complex logistical concept utilised by suppliers of illegal narcotics. An important part of the concept is the recruitment and direction of children under the criminal age of responsibility, a strategy used the world over to distance the directors of criminal enterprises from their acts. The UK continues to be a significant nation in terms of illegal drug use. For this market to be sustained the logistics system from cities to towns and towns to villages must grow ever larger. That in turn requires evolutions within the mechanics of the 'county-lines' concept.

Police Professional have recently authored an article examining the latest annual report on the phenomena.

County Lines drug operations continue to pose a major threat across the UK, despite signs of stabilisation, according to the latest National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) assessment. The report identifies more than 6,500 active lines in England, Scotland and Wales, with children and vulnerable adults still being exploited. While violence linked to County Lines is falling and enforcement is improving, the model continues to evolve through social media, highlighting the need for ongoing vigilance and partnership safeguarding.

You can read the article

here: <https://policeprofessional.com/news/county-lines-threat-remains-significant-and-continues-to-evolve-report-finds/>

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